

*PARK GRANT: Briefly describe project on Two attached pages*

Question 4 on application

The project for which funds are being requested includes both new park construction on a newly-purchased **15 acres** of land dedicated as parkland, as well as renovations to the existing American Legion Ball Fields, located on River Street in Westford's Historic Graniteville section. The new parcel, 15 acres, was purchased by the town from Patricia and Joseph Stepinski on November 4, 2010, and designated for recreational use.

The current fields complex is a three-season sports complex comprised of seven fields (five baseball and two softball), basketball courts, a tennis court, a concession stand, playground, batting cages and a parking lot not large enough to accommodate traffic in the complex. The current space does not accommodate Westford's baseball and softball needs.

The grant funds would allow for the construction of four new fields, a new parking lot with more than 100 spaces, and renovations to the existing complex. The current number of fields and parking spaces do not adequately accommodate Westford's steadily growing population. **A 90-foot diamond at this complex is needed to accommodate for adult and age 12 and over use, lights for a second field and a renovated and handicapped-accessible building that encompasses a concession stand/bathroom/meeting space area, which would allow the league to hold meetings there.** These additions would allow adult use of the complex, children ages 13 - 18 more playing time, and adaptive tournaments to take place.

The complex is **used by adults, children of all ages and special needs groups.** During the Spring season alone, 125 games and practices take place each week at these fields. *Westford Youth Baseball and Softball League* use the fields the majority of the time, along with additional use by independent organizations, groups running regional tournaments and any residents and non-residents who want to use the park for organized and non-organized recreational activity. It is the primary location for baseball and softball activity in Westford. The first of the seven fields was built more than 100 years ago for use by mill workers and their families. This project will not only expand use of the fields for residents, but will enable regional games and tournaments to take place there, increasing its regional use exponentially.

The recently purchased parcel abuts two other recently purchased parcels: 65.1 acres of conservation land, where walking trails are being developed and 30.7 acres of water department land, home to a new town well. **This project aligns with both the Patrick administration's recreational goals and Westford's 2009 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP).**

**Environmental Justice/Park resources:** By purchasing the 15 acres, Westford protected this land from being developed, which is also consistent with Westford's OSRP. Westford lacks enough space to support baseball and softball. The town needs a second 90-foot diamond, which will enable use by adults in the community and the 60-foot diamonds will enable younger children to play on size-appropriate fields. These two items, along with proposed lights if funding is available, would double the capacity of the fields because two games could be played each night.

**Formal park dedication:** Each field at the complex is dedicated to an individual who has worked to ensure open space and recreational continues to be a priority in Westford.

**High density area:** The park is located in a high density, historic neighborhood, in which several condominium complexes and one and two-family dwellings are situated.

**Public Transportation:** The Cameron Senior Center provides transportation.

**Park Equity:** As the central location for baseball and softball in town, more fields allow for more players, making it more conducive to families with multiple children playing on different teams.

**Water resources:** The new parcel of recreation land connects to Westford's walking trails and to the nearby Stony Brook.

**Expands park and outdoor recreational facilities through development of a new park and renovations to an existing park that is unusable:** Westford can move forward with this project because of land acquired by the town from private owners and in turn, dedicated the land to be used for recreation. The existing park will be renovated in order to increase its' usability. A shed on the property holds park maintenance equipment and Westford Youth Baseball and Softball League's equipment.

Renovations to the existing park are imperative. The tennis courts are in deplorable condition and basically go unused. The basketball courts need to be renovated, as they are used by siblings of all ages while games are taking place and teenagers from the busy and adjacent neighborhood walk to the park to play basketball.

In addition, the current bathroom facilities are unusable. Currently, two portable toilets sit at the complex.

**Public Hearing:** On November 4, 2010, Town Meeting voted to purchase the 15.0 acres.

**Cooperative Project/Partnerships:** Westford Recreation Department has a strong partnership with Westford Youth Baseball and Softball League, who use the fields three-seasons. WYBSL is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting positive aspects of amateur baseball and softball to children, and pay for 50 percent of the annual field maintenance costs. WYBSL, the Recreation Commission, Westford Friends of Recreation, youth soccer and individuals are collaborating to raise funds for the project.

Nearly all users are organized non-profit groups from Westford and surrounding towns. Each summer, three Bay State Tournaments here, totaling 30 games over three days. "Westford Waves", a female softball organization, hosts a three-day tournament with 24 games. The Tab Gallardo fundraising tournament is held there every summer and during the Fall season, 18 games take place on Saturday and 30 games/practices take place during the week. *Kids in Disability Sports, Inc.* hosts a baseball tournament for six out-of-town teams of children with disabilities. They hold a Barbeque and because of the current lack of adequate bathroom facilities, they have to rent a portable toilets suited for those with disabilities. Renovating our facilities to be more centrally located in the park and to be handicapped-accessible will enable more groups like Kids In Disability Sports to use the complex.

#### **Outline of project plans:**

- I. Create new parking: Remove baseball field titled G5, located closest to the new parcel, create a new parking lot with 135 additional spaces. *\*The new parking plan would create centralized parking and also away with parking that occurs along the driveway, which could block emergency vehicles from trying to get through.*
- II. Create four new ballfields: Build three new and re-create one field (current G5)
- III. Renovations to existing complex: Widen entrance from 18.5 to 40-ft wide, remove the tennis court and add a basketball court/renovate current courts, re-create a bathroom/concession stand/meeting space facility in one centralized location, all handicapped accessible.
- IV. PLAYGROUND: If funds can be raised, add a splash park to the current playground. This would enable the Parks and Recreation Department to hold summer programming there.